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BLIND BROOM-MAKERS

Betty Boyd Visits the Factory Work as Good as the Best

I saw the philanthropic Col. James Gay Butler emerging from the double store building at 3741 Cass avenue one day last week. It wasn't a very imposing looking structure, but when I investigated, I found over the doorway a modest little sign which proclaimed it to be the headquarters of a business enterprise that, though well known in the neighborhood where it is located, and flourishing, is but little heard of and almost entirely unappreciated by the city at large.

That little sign told me that here was located the wholesale and retail broom factory of the Missouri Association for the Blind, conducted by a corporation organized to aid the blind in earning their own living.

Its officers are: President, James Gay Butler; vice president, James C. Jones; treasurer, William P. Carter; secretary, Mrs. A. F. Harris. The Board of Directors is composed of Mrs. Charles Wiggins, Mrs. A. Waldheim, Miss Laura Perry, Miss Edith Coch, and Messrs. S. M. Green, Joseph Matthews, Lewis Gustafson, Joseph Haber, Oscar Leonard, George B. Mangold, Dr. John Green Jr. and Rev. James Wise.

The organization's main activity centers around this broom factory, which is now 60 per cent self-supporting. The factory began operation December 14, 1912.

Factory Was Established.

If you should chance, as I did, upon this quiet, unassuming broom factory you will be surprised at all you will see and hear there. James Huff, the blind foreman probably will relate to you, if you seem interested, how he and his 15 factory hands learned their trade at your expense and through the thoughtfulness and benevolence of the State, at the Missouri School for the Blind.

He will tell you how after being pronounced by the school authorities as capable and conscientious workmen, they went forth from the institution, with hope swelling in their breasts and in their hearts the firm resolve to make their own way through life in the future, not as helpless, groping dependents, but as strong and willing men.

Then he will tell how the bright flame of hope and confidence flickered and faltered and died within them until finally there remained only the smoldering embers, as they groped their way from door to door of the broom factories of the city without avail, for no "seeing" factory will employ a sightless man.

So these men, although possessing a trade, were unable to work at it until the Missouri Association for the Blind came to their rescue.

James Huff was studying to become a druggist. When he was 15 years old blindness came upon him, the aftermath of an attack of measles. Being at the time a resident of Pattonburg, Mo., he was sent in 1900 to the Missouri School for the Blind. Max Novack, who yesterday wound brooms, in his busy days of sight, kept a saloon at corner of Seventh and Carr streets. He speaks seven different languages and, having but recently lost his sight, learned in his old age the broom

making trade at the blind school.

Broom-Making Interesting.

Broom-making as carried on by these gentle, sightless men, who all learned the art at the Missouri Blind School, is an interesting process. Here is none of the whirl of revolving wheels or the endless sweep of leather belts, as carried on at the Cass avenue plant, is a matter of hand work and manual labor almost entirely.

When the big ball of pretty green broom corn, which weighs probably 100 pounds, arrives at the factory it is opened and the straw tied up in smaller bundles, which are dropped into a tub of water to soften the harsh fiber so it may be handled with greater ease.

The worker next grades the material; it is wonderful to watch the agile, thinking fingers pass rapidly through the green mass, separating the soft and fine parlor broom grade from the heavier and coarser bristles. Then the corn is placed upon the wooden handles and fastened there with two nails for each broom. The workers now receive it—Novack, Lyman, Aker and Monroe—who carefully wind and tie the straws to the handle, so carefully that when their work is finished no peering hand can detect the slightest roughness or inequality of straw, nor loose, broken string end. Now the wound broom is ready for the electric thrasher, the only piece of machinery in all this shop, the operator of which sees with his fingers that the corn is completely cleared of all seeds.

Next the sewing squad comes into play. J. T. Cherry, Frank Haverstick, Lewis Jenkins and Henry Meyer use the queerest, longest needles, with points at either end and an eye in the middle. Thimbles, too, are most peculiar.

Mr. Cherry and his companions wear a leather cuff on their hands in which is embedded a steel thimble-like affair. In this way the palms of both hands are protected from those deadly, double-pointed needles that flash so rapidly in and out.

Brooms Good as the Best.

I examined a broom sewed by Mr. Meyer and I feel certain no outside factory, be it equipped with ever so many pairs of the sharpest eyes, could turn out better work than does this sturdy, independent workman.

All the work thus far is performed in the large front room of the Cass avenue factory. The next process, clipping the straw, is done in a small back room by James Douglass, who also forms the finished product into bundles of a dozen each, to be distributed by James Wasson, whom some of us remember as a former Courthouse employee.

I saw Mr. Wasson yesterday, just as he was starting out to deliver a dozen heavy warehouse brooms to the Mercantile Club, and a large consignment to the City Infirmary for Joseph Thomas, Mayor Kiel's Supply Commissioner, who declares the M. A. B. brooms give more service than any others he has ever purchased.

Mr. Wasson tells me he has many customers all over St. Louis and finds no trouble in pleasing them. The factory turns out seven varieties of parlor brooms, three kinds of house brooms, warehouse brooms and heavy

stable sweeps, children's brooms and whisks and several grades of serviceable mops.

Baskets Made, Too.

In another part of the building is another industry under full head of steam, the making of baskets, another trade that, though taught at the Blind School, has had but little opportunity until the establishment of this new little factory. Here I saw baskets of every description, large and small, ornate and terribly useful looking, all made by the sightless workers. For it is Christmas time, and those fancy, delicately-woven trifles are so graceful and withal so useful that they are in much demand now.

All of us will have the opportunity of buying one of these pretty baskets this Christmas tide, for they are to be placed on sale to-morrow.

Mrs. Charles Cummings Collins, Mrs. J. L. D. Morrison, Mrs. Charles P. Wiggins, Mrs. George Tower Jr., Miss Louise Esphenel and Miss Sarah Duke, and many other society maids and matrons, have interested themselves in this sale.

They have established markets in their own homes. The Association for the Blind also directs a chair caning workshop and has a corps of six piano tuners who do their work well and thoroughly.

The casual visitor to the factory goes away cherishing the wish that every town and city of Missouri might have a like factory where the sightless ones of the community would be given an opportunity to ply their trade.

This may come to pass for the Legislature at Jefferson City may in its wisdom arrange for the appointment by the Governor of a commission to inquire into the condition of the sightless men and women and devise ways and means to help them help themselves.

—Betty Boyd.

FOREST NOTES

The timber industry represents 37 per cent of the annual production of wealth in British Columbia.

Boxmakers in the United States use more than four and a half billion board feet of lumber each year or more than one tenth of the entire lumber cut of the country.

Of two million sheep annually grazed in the state of Utah, more than a million are on the national forests, or, including lambs which are fattening for market on the forest ranges, over a million and three quarters.

In addition to his own fire detection system, the supervisor of the palisade national forest, Idaho, was notified of each fire by from five to ten different local settlers, who thus showed their co-operation in working for fire suppression.

The Unita Mountains of Utah, included within the Wasatch, Uinta, and Ashley national forests, should become a favorite recreation region, because of the many small lakes within depressions scooped out by glacial drifts. Seventy such lakes can be counted from Reid's peak, and one particular township, 36 miles square, contains more than a hundred.

WOOD FOR SALE — Delivered promptly. Max Freeman, Farmington, Mo. Phone Loida Line, No. 9000.

TRAVELER'S GUIDE.

To reach Farmington you can use either one of the following routes:

From the North.
(Via St. Louis.)

M. R. & B. T. Ry.—Leave St. Louis at 7:32 a. m. and 3:55 p. m., arriving at Farmington over electric railway Iron Mountain and Illinois Southern via Bismarck—Arrive at Farmington over electric railway from Esther at 4:31 p. m.

From Flat River at 11:56 a. m. and 7:36 p. m.

Frisco & Illinois Southern—Leave St. Louis at 8:05 a. m., arriving at Farmington over electric railway from Esther at 2:11 p. m.

Iron Mountain—Leave St. Louis at 7:32 or 9:05 a. m., arriving at Farmington over the electric railway from DeLassus at 12:36 p. m.

From the South.

Iron Mountain via Bismarck and DeLassus—Arrive at Farmington over electric railway at 12:36 p. m.

Belmont Branch of Iron Mountain—Arrive at Farmington over electric railway from DeLassus at 2:27 p. m.

Frisco and Illinois Southern via Ste Genevieve—Arrive at Farmington over electric railway from Esther at 2:11 p. m.

Cape Girardeau Northern—Arrive at Farmington at 8:10 p. m. from Cape Girardeau and intermediate points. Going south the train leaves Farmington at 7:00 a. m. Both trains make connection with Frisco trains at Perryville Junction.

To Reach St. Louis.

You can go over either of the roads at the following hours:

Illinois Southern & Frisco—Leave Farmington over electric railway to Esther at 2:14 p. m., arriving in St. Louis at 8:25 p. m.

M. R. & B. T.—Leave Farmington over electric railway to Flat River at 5:55 a. m. and 2:14 p. m., arriving in St. Louis at 10:05 a. m. and 6:27 p. m. Fare from Farmington, \$1.66. Round trip, \$3.22. (If passenger can go and return same day, the round trip rate is \$3.22.)

Iron Mountain—Leave Farmington over electric railway to DeLassus at 1:37 p. m., arriving in St. Louis at 6:27 p. m. Fare for one way from Farmington \$1.90; round trip, \$3.80.

ST. FRANCOIS COUNTY RY. CO. Time Table (Condensed.)

Between Farmington and Flat River	
Lv. Farmington.	Arr. Flat River.
5:55 a. m.	6:31 a. m.
7:28 a. m.	8:04 a. m.
8:57 a. m.	9:34 a. m.
10:15 a. m.	10:53 a. m.
12:50 p. m.	1:26 p. m.
2:14 p. m.	2:50 p. m.
4:54 p. m.	5:30 p. m.
6:34 p. m.	7:10 p. m.

Lv. Flat River	
6:37 a. m.	7:13 a. m.
8:04 a. m.	8:42 a. m.
9:37 a. m.	10:14 a. m.
11:05 a. m.	11:41 a. m.
1:25 p. m.	2:11 p. m.
3:55 p. m.	4:31 p. m.
5:38 p. m.	6:14 p. m.
7:20 p. m.	7:56 p. m.

Between Farmington and Lead Belt.

Local Service between Farmington and Leadwood, Bonne Terre, Elvins and intermediate points: Cars leaving Farmington at 5:55 and 3:57 a. m. and 4:54 p. m. make direct connections with M. R. & B. T. Ry. at Flat River for Bonne Terre and Leadwood and intermediate points.

Cars leaving Farmington at 7:28 and 10:15 a. m. and 2:14 and 4:54 p. m. make direct connections with the M. R. & B. T. Ry. at Flat River for Elvins and intermediate points.

All M. R. & B. T. Ry. trains make direct connections at Flat River with electric cars for Farmington and intermediate points.


Between Farmington and DeLassus	
Lv. Farmington.	Arr. DeLassus.
11:41 a. m.	12:50 p. m.
1:37 p. m.	1:45 p. m.

Lv. DeLassus.	
12:35 p. m.	Arr. Farmington.
2:15 p. m.	2:27 p. m.

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RAILROADS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT

The Common Carriers Ask for Relief—President Wilson Directs Attention of Public to Their Needs.

The committee of railroad executives, headed by Mr. Frank Trumbull, representing thirty-five of the leading railroad systems of the nation, recently presented to President Wilson a memorandum briefly reviewing the difficulties now confronting the railroads of the country and asking for the co-operation of the governmental authorities and the public in supporting railroad credits and recognizing an emergency which requires that the railroads be given additional revenues.

The memorandum recites that the European war has resulted in general depression of business on the American continent and in the dislocation of credits at home and abroad. With revenues decreasing and interest rates increasing the transportation systems of the country face a most serious crisis and the memorandum is a strong presentation of the candle burning at both ends and the perils that must ultimately attend such a conflagration when the flames meet is apparent to all.

In their general discussion the railroad representatives say in part: "By reason of legislation and regulation by the federal government and the forty-eight states acting independently of each other, as well as through the action of a strong public opinion, the expenses in recent years have increased. No criticism is here made of the general theory of governmental action, but on the other hand, the genuineness can relieve the carriers of the perils created thereby."

President Wilson, in transmitting the memorandum of the railroad presidents to the public, characterizes it as "a lucid statement of plain truth." The president recognizing the emergency as extraordinary, continuing, said in part:

"You ask me to call the attention of the country to the imperative need that railway credits be sustained and the railroads helped in every possible way, whether by private co-operative effort or by the action, wherever feasible of governmental agencies, and I am glad to do so because I think the need very real."

The conference was certainly a fortunate one for the nation and the president is to be congratulated for opening the gate to a new world of effort in which everyone may co-operate.

There are many important problems in our complex civilization that will yield to co-operation which will not lend themselves to arbitrary rulings of commissions and financing railroads is one of them. The man with the money is a factor that cannot be eliminated from any business transaction and the public is an interested party that should always be consulted and happily the president has invited all to participate in the solution of our railroad problems.

MRS. MCCLAIN'S EXPERIENCE WITH CROUP.

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